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TENANCY AND OWNERSHIP AMONG NEGRO FARMERS IN SOUTHAMPTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

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PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF STUDY

In the South, agriculture always has been and still is the principal economic activity of the negro race. The negro population of the 16 Southern States (including Delaware) constituted, in 1860, 92.2 per cent of the total negro population of the United States. In 1920, regardless of the fact that the negroes had been free for over 50 years, 85.2 per cent of the total negro population of the country still lived in the Southern States. Negroes constitute 27 per cent of the population of these States, and 75 per cent of them live in rural districts. Approximately 29 per cent of all the farms in these 16 States are operated by negroes.

Since the World War, agricultural and industrial conditions have been such as to cause an unprecedented wave of emigration of negroes from the South to northern industrial centers. This migration is, in

[1] The field work in gathering the materials for this bulletin was performed mainly by W. S. Scarborough. The study was prepared under the direction of L. C. Gray, and the bulletin for the most part has been written by him because of the resignation of Doctor Scarborough.

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part, the result of the general nationwide movement from country to city. Unquestionably, however, there are other potent influences responsible for this migration.

Calculations of the increase of negroes in the cities having a negro population of 25,000 or more show that there was an increase of 28.5 per cent between 1900 and 1910, and an increase of 42.2 per cent for the following decade.[2] Between 1910 and 1920, rural negro population decreased for the country as a whole by 3.4 per cent, whereas negro urban population increased 32.6 per cent during the same time. The relatively larger rate of negro increase in cities as compared with rural districts is largely an expression of migration from the rural districts, for the natural rate of increase of negroes in rural districts exceeds greatly the corresponding rate in cities. Available vital statistics show that in cities negro birth rates are lower and negro death rates much higher than in rural districts.[3]

These tendencies, so significant for the future of the negro race, raise the question as to the economic condition of negro farmers. The present study was undertaken to reveal the conditions prevailing among negro farmers in a selected district of southern Virginia, a region where plantation organization has largely disappeared and where negro farmers, whether owners or tenants, enjoy a comparatively large measure of independence. The essential aim was to determine the extent or lack of progress with particular reference to attendant circumstances, especially conditions of land tenure.[4]

The section selected for this study is situated in the western part of Southampton County, Va., between the towns of Drewryville and Adams Grove. This county is in the southeastern part of Virginia adjoining the State of North Carolina (fig. 1). It is in the Tidewater section of the State, which is characterized in general by level to gently undulating topography. Three rivers border or traverse the county, the Blackwater, the Meherrin, and the Nottoway. The bottom lands of these streams are often swampy and covered with a heavy growth of timber, much of which is not of a commercial nature.

A description of the soil in the Census of Agriculture for 1880 is as follows:[5]

> The chief soil is mostly of a light gray sandy character, with yellow or red subsoil, which occupies about one-half of the lands in this region, and is timbered with pine, oak, hickory, dogwood, maple, and poplar. The light, fine sandy surface soil is from 4 to 6 inches thick, and is easily tilled. The chief crops produced here are corn, cotton, peanuts, and potatoes, but the soil is apparently best adapted to corn * * *. Very little damage is done by washing or gulleys on the slopes.
>
> A second quality of land, designated as "*White Oak Land*," comprises about one-fourth of the lands of the region, and has a timber growth of oak, gum, pine, etc. The soil is a clay, 4 inches in thickness, over a blue clay subsoil.

This soil is adapted to the raising of cotton, grain, and clover, especially clover.

In the section studied probably 75 per cent of the farmers are colored. This is a section where the negro is independent of supervision of the white farmers and has made progress largely through his

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[2] Rossiter, W. S. Increase of Population in the United States, 1910–1920. Washington, Govt. Print. Off., 1922. U. S. Bureau of the Census. Census Monograph I, p. 128.

[3] Rossiter, W. S. Increase of Population in the United States, 1910–1920. Washington, Govt. Print. Off., 1922. U. S. Bureau of the Census. Census Monograph I, p. 130.

[4] It should be noted that the data on which this study is based were obtained in the spring of 1921. For this reason, data on value of property should be considered as of the date of the survey and it should be recognized that considerable changes in values have occurred since that time.

[5] U. S. Census Office. Tenth Census, 1880. Report on Cotton Production in the United States. Washington, Govt. Print. Off., 1884, pt. II, p. 636. Census Report, vol. VI.

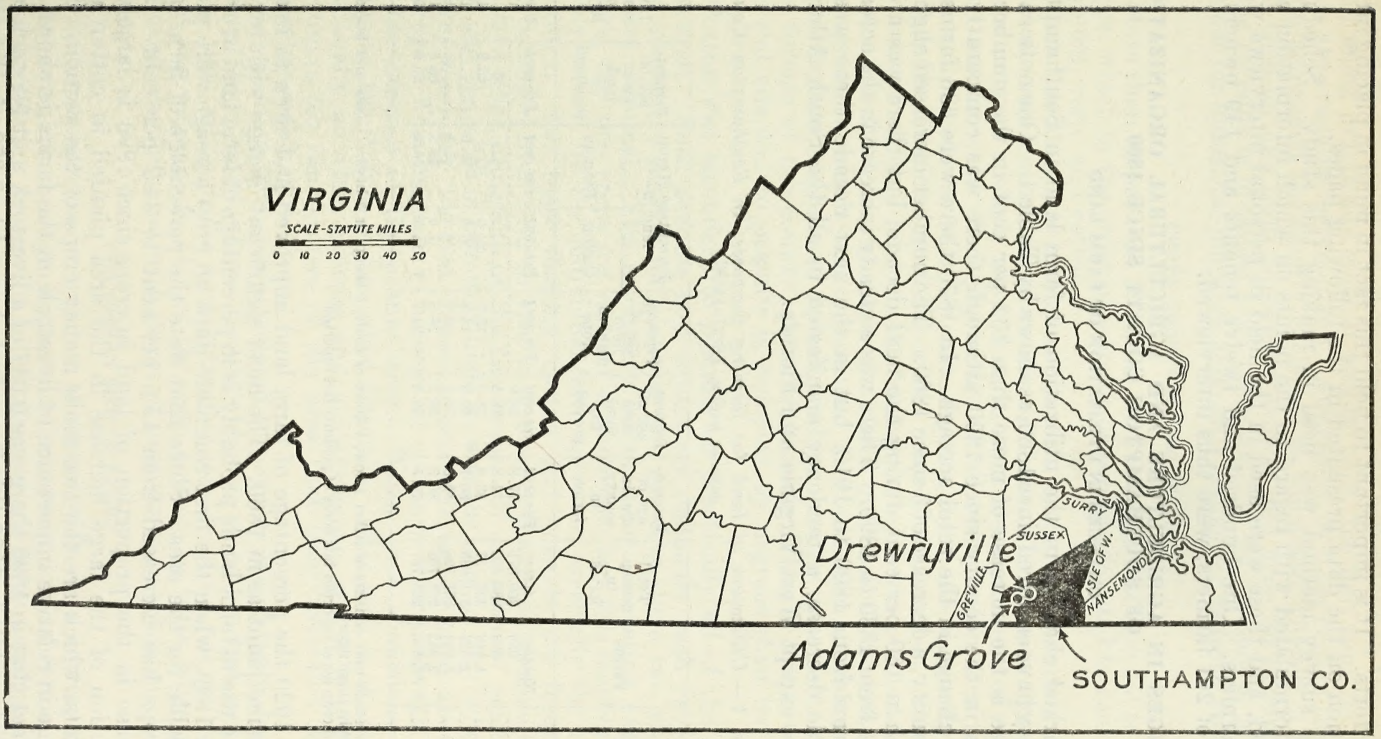

FIG. 1—The locality studied is in Southampton County, Va.

own efforts. It is important to hold this fact in mind in placing interpretation on the data presented in the following pages.

The survey method was used in making this study. Schedules were formulated with regard to the points on which information was desired, and these were used in the field in personal interviews with the farmers. One hundred and twelve tenants and 149 owners, a total of 261 farmers, were thus interviewed.

CHANGES IN AGRICULTURE AND AGRICULTURAL ORGANIZATION OF SOUTHAMPTON COUNTY SINCE 1860

CHANGES IN UTILIZATION OF FARM LAND

Marked changes in the utilization of farm land in Southampton County have occurred since 1860, as shown by Table 1. One noticeable change is the increase of more than 133 per cent in the number of farms in the county since 1890 although there was comparatively little change in the total acreage. In 1870 there were 636 farms in the county, a decrease of 3 since 1860. The number increased slightly less than 160 per cent during the next decade, but there was a decrease from 1880 to 1890. There was a steady increase in the acreage in farms from 1890 to 1910, but in the next decade there was a notable decrease, a tendency manifested in all the South Atlantic States except West Virginia and Florida.

TABLE 1.—*Utilization of land for farming purposes, in Southampton County, census years, 1860–1920*

Year	Farms	Total acreage in farms	Percentage of area in county in farms	Percentage of farm land improved	Percentage of farm land in crops	Percentage of crop land in—		Percentage of farm land in woodland	Livestock on farms
						Cotton	Peanuts		
	Number	*Acres*	*Per cent*	*Per cent*	*Per cent*	*Per cent*	*Per cent*	*Per cent*	*Units* [1]
1860	639	300,671	77.8	43.9	----------	----------	----------	----------	17,266
1870	636	289,316	74.8	42.5	----------	----------	----------	57.3	5,619
1880	1,648	323,127	83.6	33.5	15.5	23.0	(2)	46.3	15,210
1890	1,523	311,933	80.7	39.9	18.8	13.0	27.9	----------	13,622
1900	2,683	331,728	85.8	39.1	23.8	4.7	40.3	----------	14,591
1910	2,882	333,705	86.3	38.3	24.8	7.4	43.8	60.5	16,219
1920	3,550	295,787	76.5	40.4	34.7	14.7	36.4	57.9	20,713

[1] A livestock unit consists of either 1 cow, 1 horse or mule, 5 sheep, or 5 hogs. Goats and burros not included in these figures.

[2] Total crop acres reported but acres of peanuts not reported.

In 1920 the percentage of farm land improved had risen to nearly the same point as in 1860. The most significant change with regard to the use of farm lands probably is in percentage of farm land in crops since 1880, when the first complete data on crop acreage were made available for the area. Since that date the percentage of farm land in crops has increased from 15.5 per cent to 34.7 per cent. The increase in the proportion of land in crops since 1890 is largely a reflection of the large increase in the area planted in cotton and peanuts, which are the two main money crops of the section. The change in relative importance of livestock on the farms is shown by the fact that in 1860 there was 0.057 of a livestock unit for each acre in farms, while in 1920 this figure had changed to 0.070 of a livestock unit for each acre in farms, or an increase of 22.8 per cent.

Much of the county is in woodland, the percentage in this class of land being practically what it was in 1870, the first time for which data are available for woodland. At present, 57.9 per cent of the total farm acreage of the county is classed as woodland. Much of this is not used for any farm purposes whatever, not even for grazing, but some revenue is obtained from the woodland by the sale of hickory timber for industrial purposes and other timber for railroad crossties.

CROPS GROWN IN THIS SECTION

More than 99 per cent of all the land in crops was devoted to three crops, which in the order of amount of acreage devoted to each were peanuts, corn, and cotton.

Corn has always been one of the main crops in the county as far back as crop acreage statistics are available. The census figures for the county as a whole show that, in 1919, 34.8 per cent of all crop land was in corn. The percentage of all crop land in corn for the farms surveyed was 36.8 per cent, slightly above the census figure.

Peanuts form the most important crop of the section. About 45 per cent of all crop land on the farms surveyed was planted to this crop. The 1919 census shows that 36.4 per cent of the total crop acreage of the county was in peanuts. It would seem, therefore, that negro farmers emphasized peanut production more than did the average farmer of the county, possibly because a larger proportion of the soil adapted to peanuts is occupied by negroes than by white farmers.

Cotton was secondary to peanuts on practically all of the farms surveyed. Both peanuts and cotton are distinctly cash crops and the machinery needed for planting and growing these two crops is almost identical. The machinery required for harvesting and preparing the two crops for market is different, but this machinery is rarely owned by the individual farm operator, especially the tenant operator. For these reasons, cotton and peanuts are frequently interchanged from year to year in a manner that is adjustable to the relative price prospects of the two crops. If the price of peanuts is low and the price of cotton is high, as was the case in 1921 when the survey was made, the area planted to cotton is usually much above the average. This increase in acreage of cotton is nearly always made at the expense of the peanut area. When price conditions favor peanuts, the shift is in the other direction. This shift is made with practically no extra expense and inconvenience, and it is probably fortunate for the farmers of the area that they have two readily interchangeable cash crops.

This position of cotton as related to peanuts is strikingly shown in Table 1 (p. 4 which shows that the acreage of cotton has increased since 1900, when prices were extremely low, from 4.7 per cent of the total crop acreage to 14.7 of the crop acreage in 1919, when prices of cotton as compared with prices of peanuts were relatively high.

CHANGES IN SIZE OF FARMS

The large increase in number of farms without a corresponding increase in farm acreage suggests a decrease in size of farms. The change reflects a process of subdivision of the large holdings of the ante bellum period, a process which was very rapid from 1870 to 1880, and again after 1890. The average size of farms decreased from

470.5 acres in 1860 to 83.3 acres in 1920. This great change was caused in the main by the disappearance of farms of 100 acres or more. Farms of 1,000 acres or more decreased during this period from 2.5 per cent of the total number of farms to 0.3 per cent in 1920. Farms of 500 to 999 acres decreased from 6.7 per cent of the total number of farms to 1.3 per cent during this period; and farms of from 100 to 499 acres decreased from 55.6 per cent of the total number of farms to 24.4 in 1920. The percentage of the total number of farms of 100 acres or more in the county between these two dates decreased from 64.8 per cent to 26 per cent.

Farms of from 20 to 49 acres increased from 1.11 per cent of all farms in 1860 to 39.3 per cent in 1920. The total increase of farms of 99 acres or less was from 35.2 per cent of the total number of farms in 1860 to 74 per cent in 1920.

CHANGES IN VALUE OF FARM REAL ESTATE

Until recent years the per acre value of farm real estate in Southampton County was comparatively low (Table 2), a condition that probably was favorable to the considerable progress of negroes in farm ownership shown in a later part of this bulletin. As late as 1900 the average value of farm real estate was only $7.07 per acre, having increased from $4.16 per acre in 1870. During the decade 1900–1910 the value per acre more than doubled, and it increased nearly 250 per cent in the following decade. The large decrease in the average size of farms considerably influenced the average valuation of farms, which declined from $3,235 in 1860 to $1,046 in 1900. From that date a striking increase in the average valuation of farms has occurred, although there has been some decrease in the average size of farms. In 1920 the average valuation per farm was $5,377, including machinery and livestock, or an increase of 152 per cent during the decade.

TABLE 2.—*Total value of the average farm in Southampton County, Va., proportion of this value represented by different classes of farm capital, and average value per acre of each class, 1860–1920*

Year	Average acreage per farm	Average total farm value	Percentage of farm value in—				Average value per acre		
			Land and buildings	Equipment	Implements and machinery	Livestock	Land and buildings	Implements and machinery	Livestock
	Acres	*Dollars*	*Per cent*	*Per cent*	*Per cent*	*Per cent*			
1860	470.5	3,235	78.1	21.9	3.8	18.1	$5.37	$0.26	$1.24
1870	545.9	2,278	83.1	16.9	2.7	14.2	4.16	.14	.71
1880	196.1	1,200	85.1	14.9	2.7	12.2	5.21	.16	.75
1890	204.8	1,558	86.6	13.4	2.8	10.6	6.59	.21	.81
1900	123.6	1,046	83.6	16.4	4.1	12.3	7.07	.35	1.04
1910	115.8	2,136	86.6	13.4	3.4	10.0	15.98	.63	1.84
1920	83.3	5,377	84.9	15.1	4.5	10.6	54.80	2.90	6.84

CHANGES IN VALUE OF OTHER KINDS OF FARM PROPERTY

The average value of machinery and implements per acre of improved land is slightly higher than for the United States as a whole. The same is true of livestock. The proportion of the total value of farm property invested in machinery and implements has increased somewhat since 1860, because of the large relative increase from 1910 to 1920, but the relative investment in livestock has largely decreased since 1860.

CHANGES IN FARM TENURE IN THE SECTION

Figures on tenure are obtainable for the first time in 1880 in census data. At that time 45 per cent of all farms in Southampton County were operated by tenants. (Table 3.) A decrease in the percentage of farms operated by tenants occurred between that date and the census of 1890, at which time 31 per cent of all farms in the county were operated by tenants. It will be recalled that this was a decade in which the total number of farms in the county decreased, and when apparently the process of subdivision which had developed rapidly from 1870 to 1880, was temporarily suspended. Approximately 56 per cent of all farms were operated by tenants in both of the following census years, and in 1920 the percentage had increased to 59.2.

Thus, in 1920 nearly 60 per cent of the farms of Southampton County were operated by tenants, as compared with 31 per cent in 1890, the increase having occurred in the decade 1890–1900 and to a less extent in the decade 1910–1920. The percentage of tenancy was much higher than in the United States as a whole or the State of Virginia as a whole. The percentage of tenancy in Southampton County, however, is somewhat less than the percentage of tenancy in most parts of the South, where there are large numbers of negroes.

TABLE 3.—*Number and percentage of all farms operated by tenants and owners in Southampton County, Va., since 1880 and comparative figures on percentage of tenancy in Virginia and the United States, 1880–1920*

Year	Farms of Southampton County			Percentage of farms operated in—			
	Total	Operated by—		Virginia by—		United States by—	
		Owners and managers	Tenants	Owners and managers	Tenants	Owners and managers	Tenants
	Number	*Per cent*	*Per cent*	*Per cent*	*Per cent*	*Per cent*	*Per cent*
1880	1,648	55.0	45.0	70.5	29.5	74.4	25.6
1890	1,523	69.0	31.0	73.1	26.9	71.6	28.4
1900	2,683	43.3	56.7	69.3	30.7	64.7	35.3
1910	2,882	44.0	56.0	73.5	26.5	63.0	37.0
1920	3,550	40.8	59.2	74.4	25.6	61.9	38.1

NEGRO POPULATION AND FARM TENURE IN SOUTHAMPTON COUNTY

The colored population of Southampton County has been larger, each decade since 1790, than the white population. In 1790 the total population of the county was 12,864, of which 5,993 were slaves and 559 free colored. There was a gradual increase from 12,864 in 1790 to 16,074 in 1830, followed by a decline during the following 40 years to 12,285 in 1870. This date marks a distinct period in the change of population in Southampton County. From that date with each successive census year to 1920 the population gained rapidly until there were 27,555 inhabitants in the county in 1920, of which 16,919 were negroes and 10,635 white.

Practically all of the increase in population between 1790 and 1830 was caused by an increase in the negro population of the county. Almost all of the decrease between 1830 and 1870 was due to a decline in the negro population of the county. Again, since 1870 the increased negro population of the county has been the principal source of the total increase.

TABLE 4.—*Changes in number* [1] *of white and colored farmers classified by tenure, Southampton County, 1900–1920*

Year	Total farms [1]	Percentage of all farms operated by—		Percentage of all negro farmers that were—		Percentage of all white farmers that were—	
		Negroes	Whites	Owners	Tenants	Owners	Tenants
	Number	*Per cent*	*Per cent*	*Per cent*	*Per cent*	*Per cent*	*Per cent*
1900	2,668	47.6	52.4	24.0	76.0	60.3	39.7
1910	2,873	49.7	50.3	29.1	70.9	58.4	41.6
1920	3,538	56.6	43.4	28.2	71.8	56.8	43.2

[1] Excluding farms operated by managers.

The numbers of owner operators and tenants for the two races are available on the county basis for the three census dates since 1900. (Table 4.) In 1900, negro farmers constituted 47.6 per cent of the total farmers in the county. By 1920 this percentage had increased to 56.6 per cent of all farmers in the county, the figures being calculated by excluding manager-operated farms. During the same period the percentage of all negroes who were owners increased from 24 to 28.2 per cent. On the other hand, not only did the whites decrease in proportion to all farmers in the county, but the proportion of all white farmers who owned the farms they operated decreased from 60.3 per cent to 56.8 per cent. Between 1910 and 1920, however, the proportion of owner farmers decreased both for colored and for whites.

SIZE AND VALUE OF FARMS AND OF FARM PROPERTY

Detailed statistics concerning systems of farming were taken for 261 farms in the section surveyed. Of these, 112 were tenant farms, and 149 were owned entirely or in part by the men who operated them.

TABLE 5.—*Average size and valuation of farms and distribution of valuation of farm capital for different tenure classes*

Tenure class	Operators	Average acreage per farm	Average value per farm of—				Average value per acre of—	
			All farm property	Land and buildings	Equipment	Buildings other than dwelling	Farm land without buildings	Equipment
	Number	*Acres*						
All tenants	112	56.9	$2,092.00	$1,663.00	$429.00	$123.00	$20.21	$7.54
All owners	149	149.4	7,540.00	6,536.00	1,004.00	262.00	34.12	6.72
All operators	261	109.7	5,194.00	4,437.00	757.00	203.00	31.02	6.90

The average size of the farms surveyed, for both tenure classes, was 109.7 acres, with an average valuation of $5,194 per farm (Table 5), of which $757 was livestock and machinery. According to the census of 1920, the average size of all farms in the county was 83.3 acres, valued at $5,377, including $811 worth of livestock and machinery. Thus it will be seen that the farms for which the surveyed data were obtained are somewhat larger in acreage but had a smaller total value and a smaller equipment value than the averages for the county.

The average size of the tenant farms for which surveyed data were taken was 56.9 acres, with an average valuation of $2,092, of which $429 was in equipment. The average valuation of farm buildings other than dwellings on the tenant farms was $123. This seems comparatively small when the valuation of buildings in other sections of the country is considered. But the lumber for constructing these buildings is usually sawed locally, and the labor is that of the farm operator himself. For these reasons the buildings are probably valued at considerably less than their actual reproduction cost.

Farms operated by owners included in the survey averaged 149 acres, valued at $7,540. The average valuation of equipment was $1,004 and of buildings, other than dwellings, $262.

The average value of land and buildings per acre was $29.23 for tenant farms and $43.44 for owner farms. A considerable portion of this difference in value per acre is due to the fact that the dwelling on the average owner-operated farm is worth more than three times as much as the dwelling on the average tenant farm. But this will not account for all the difference. The value of farm land per acre, exclusive of buildings, average $20.21 for tenant farms and $34.12 for owner farms.

Equipment on the tenant farms was worth $7.54 an acre and on the farms operated by owners $6.72. This may indicate that on the average the tenant farms surveyed were somewhat better equipped than those operated by owners. The difference between tenants and owners in this respect, however, does not appear when equipment value is given in terms of crop acreage. The tenant farms had an average of $12.80 worth of equipment per crop acre as compared with $20.55 per crop acre on the farms operated by owners.

CHANGES IN TENURE STATUS OF THE FARMERS SURVEYED

Tenure progress in this county is usually made by progressive steps through different tenure stages to complete ownership of farms. This progress, commonly known as "climbing the tenure ladder," consists of passing through some or all of the following tenure stages, usually in the order in which they are named:

1. Worker without wages on parents' farms.
2. Farm hand.
3. Cropper (this is a tenure stage common only in the South, which to a considerable extent takes the place of the farm-hand stage in other sections of the country).
4. Share tenant owning most or all of the farm equipment.
5. Cash tenant.
6. Owner operator with farm mortgaged or owner additional; that is, the stage in which the operator owns part of the land operated and rents the remainder.
7. Owner operator with farm free of mortgage.

All of these stages except the first two were represented by the tenure of the farmers interviewed at the time the survey was made, but the number of farmers involved in some of the stages does not warrant a study of the tenure history of these farmers on the basis of all of the several stages. Table 6 shows the stages and the length of time in each stage through which the owner farmers had passed before becoming owners, and similar information is given for the tenant farmers.

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More than 70 per cent of the owners had been both croppers and tenants before becoming owners, taking on the average six years in the cropper stage and eight years in the tenant stage. They had also been owner farmers an average of 12 years. Of 105 owners who had passed through both the cropper and the tenant stages prior to attaining ownership, only 8 had received wealth by inheritance, gift, or marriage. Of the 31 owners who had occupied only the tenant stage before becoming owners, 4 had been aided by one of these forms of gratuitous financial assistance. Only a few owner farmers had been farm hands working for wages and a few others had climbed into the ownership stage directly from the cropper stage. Over 85 per cent of the tenants had been croppers prior to becoming tenants, having spent nine years in each stage. Of those who were croppers at the time of the survey nearly half had been tenants at one time.

Of those who were owner farmers at the time of the survey only one case was reported where an owner farmer had suffered such severe financial losses that he had been compelled to revert to the tenant stage. A considerable number had been forced to sell part of their land to meet their obligations. Personal comments of those interviewed indicated that such cases were generally due to buying too much land or attempting to purchase additional farms on too large a margin of credit. A considerable number of owner farmers were reported as hard pressed, having bought land during the World War at high prices. One owner, in an effort to help his mother financially, had lost 34 acres out of 54 originally inherited. Several owner farmers had suffered heavy losses by fire, but had not been forced to revert to a lower stage of tenure.

Three tenants and one cropper reported that they had at one time owned land, but one of the tenants had been unable to retain ownership. Comments of individuals indicate that a large proportion of the tenants were eager to become landowning farmers.

TABLE 6.—*Summary of tenure progress*

Tenure class	Operators	Average tenure stage				Average gratuitous assistance	
		Wage hand	Cropper	Tenant	Owner	Tenant	Owner
Owners who have been—	*Number*	*Years*	*Years*	*Years*	*Years*		
Cropper and owner	4		13		3		
Tenant and owner	31			12	12	$135	$116
Cropper, tenant, and owner [1]	105		6	8	12	70	32
Wage hand, cropper, tenant, and owner	4	11	4	11	7	50	
Total owner operators	146						
Tenants who have been—							
Tenant only	14			18			
Cropper and tenant	83		9	9		12	
Total tenant operators [2]	97						
Croppers who have been—							
Cropper only	7		9				
Tenant and cropper	6		14	8			
Wage hand and cropper	1	16	6				
Total cropper operators	14						

[1] There were two other operators who should be reported with the owners, but years were not given.
[2] There was one schedule of a man who had been cropper, tenant, and owner, but had lost his farm and become a tenant.

Credit had been a considerable factor in enabling the owner farmers to acquire their land. Inquiry was made as to the employment of credit in the acquisition of the first farm owned. Of the 146 farm owners for which such data are available, 94 had employed credit in the acquisition of the first farm. The average value of the purchase was $2,299; of this, $1,458, or 63.4 per cent, was borrowed. In 40 cases the sellers of the land were the creditors. One obtained the loan from his father, and four from other relatives. Fifteen had borrowed from banks, and 23 from other sources than those mentioned. The interest charged by the banks averaged 7.3 per cent, as compared with averages of from 6 to 6.3 per cent for the other loans. As in many parts of the country sellers who allowed credit granted comparatively low rates of interest, averaging 6 per cent. This may have been offset, however, as it frequently is, by higher prices charged for the property.

Fifty-two farmers had not employed credit in acquiring the first farm owned, but the average value of the farms acquired by them was only $1,200, as compared with $2,299 for those employing credit. Of the 52 farmers, 7 had inherited the first farm, with an average value of $1,781.

NET WORTH OF FARMERS AND KINDS OF PROPERTY OWNED

The 112 tenants interviewed had an average net worth (value of property minus indebtedness) of $815, as compared with an average of $8,420 for the 149 owner farmers. Nearly 70 per cent of the tenants had a net worth of less than $1,000, and no tenant was worth over $3,200. (Table 7.) On the other hand, only 7 of the 149 owners were worth less than $1,000. About one-third of the owners were worth less than $3,000; another third were worth $3,000 but less than $6,000; the remaining third were worth $6,000 or more, but in this group was a considerable number of much larger net worth ranging up to more than $75,000.

The principal form of wealth owned by the persons interviewed was farm land and the equipment requisite for its operation. Table 8 contains a classification of these holdings. Although more than half of the owners had holdings of less than 100 acres and nearly 70 per cent under 150 acres, there were 6 with 500 acres or over and 23 with 250 acres or more. Only 3 tenants and 1 cropper had ever owned land, and only 2 tenants and 1 cropper owned land at the time of the survey.

Of the farmers interviewed, 18 reported the ownership of residence property other than that occupied, with an average value of $1,750. Eight reported the ownership of business property, with an average value of $1,278. Thirty-six held stocks and bonds, with an average value of $1,441, probably largely the result of Liberty-bond campaigns. Only three reported any other kind of property.

TABLE 7.—*Distribution of net worth* [1] *of 261 negro farmers, Southampton County, Va.*

Range of net worth	Tenants	Owners	Range of net worth	Tenants	Owners
	Number	*Number*		*Number*	*Number*
Under $500	48	3	$10,000 and under $12,000		7
$500 and under $1,000	30	4	$12,000 and under $15,000		3
$1,000 and under $1,500	19	10	$15,000 and under $20,000		8
$1,500 and under $2,000	8	8	$20,000 and under $30,000		4
$2,000 and under $3,000	5	24	$30,000 and under $50,000		6
$3,000 and under $4,000	2	18	$50,000 and under $75,000		2
$4,000 and under $5,000		18	$75,000 and under $100,000		1
$5,000 and under $6,000		15			
$6,000 and under $8,000		10	Total number	112	149
$8,000 and under $10,000		8	Average net worth	$815	$8,420

[1] Assets minus debts.

TABLE 8.—*Distribution of land holdings according to acreage owned by each of the 1,461 farmers surveyed*

Acreage	Owners	Acreage	Owners
Acres	*Number*	*Acres*	*Number*
Under 50	28	350 to 399	3
50 to 99	49	400 to 449	3
100 to 149	21	450 to 499	2
150 to 199	15	500 and over	6
200 to 249	10		
250 to 299	5	Total number	[1] 146
300 to 349	4		

[1] The average size of the holdings was not obtained for three of the farmers interviewed.

A number of these negro farmers were found to be very well-to-do. One of them owned land valued at $50,000 free of debt. He had a residence worth $3,000, and had $6,000 in bonds. He had been able to acquire his land largely by means of engaging in the lumber business, for which Adams Grove is an important center. The value of his holdings was mainly the result of the large increase in land values during the years preceding the survey. This man was exceedingly enterprising and public spirited. He was particularly active in encouraging the establishment of public-school facilities. Another owner farmer had a large lumber business, from which his principal income was derived.

Another operator had farm property valued at $40,000, a $5,000 residence, a business property worth $3,000, and $11,000 in stocks and bonds. He was a man of little education, and began with no property. His children had been well educated at Hampton Institute, where the sons had received special instruction in agriculture.

Several of the farmers who owned upwards of 500 acres each had begun with nothing. There was a tendency, however, for the children of the well-to-do families to intermarry, and thus preserve the fortunes accumulated by the parents.

In general, progress in accumulation had been facilitated by the purchase of land at a time of low values, and holding it until the large increase came. In a number of instances, the lumber business developed on this cheap land had been an important contributing factor, and in most cases good fortune had been based on hard work, common sense, and thrift.

INDEBTEDNESS AND CREDIT

Of the 149 owner farmers, 112, or 75.2 per cent had mortgages on their farms. About 46 per cent of the mortgages were under $1,000 in amount (Table 9), and 67 per cent were under $2,000. The average amount of all mortgages per farmer subject to mortgage indebtedness was $1,923.

TABLE 9.—*Distribution of mortgage indebtedness on 112 owner farms, Southampton County, Va.*

Amount of mortgage	Owners in each group	Amount of mortgage	Owners in each group
	Number		*Number*
Under $500	14	$4,000 and under $5,000	6
$500 and under $1,000	37	$5,000 and under $7,000	9
$1,000 and under $1,500	15	$7,000 and under $10,000	3
$1,500 and under $2,000	9		
$2,000 and under $3,000	12	Total subject to mortgage	112
$3,000 and under $4,000	7	Average amount of mortgage	$1,923

To determine the relationship of indebtedness to assets, the mortgage indebtedness and short-time indebtedness were added, and the percentage of this indebtedness to the total assets of each owner farmer was calculated (Table 10).[6] On the whole, most of these farmers had been unusually conservative in subjecting themselves and their property to a heavy burden of indebtedness. Eight of them had no indebtedness of any kind. More than one-third of the owner farmers had indebtedness amounting to less than 10 per cent of the value of their assets, and nearly three-fifths had indebtedness amounting to less than 20 per cent. Only 15 of the 149 owner farmers had indebtedness of 50 per cent or more of the value of their assets.

TABLE 10.—*One hundred and forty-nine owner farmers classified according to percentages of their indebtedness to value of their assets, Southampton County, Va.*

Percentages of indebtedness	Class	Percentages of indebtedness	Class
	Number		*Number*
Under 5	35	50 and under 60	8
5 and under 10	18	60 and under 70	5
10 and under 15	17	70 and under 80	1
15 and under 20	16	80 and over	1
20 and under 30	21		
30 and under 40	16	Total number	149
40 and under 50	11		

Apparently, but few of these negro farmers were employing bank credit, for only 18 owners and 2 tenants reported this form of indebtedness. (Table 11.) For the owners the average amount of bank credit employed was $598, with an average interest rate of 7.6 per cent. Both for owners and for tenants the prevailing system was store credit. Of the 146 owners for which such data are available, 130 reported store credit to an average amount of $125; every one

[6] In the case of short-term indebtedness, the farmer was not asked to give the amount of such indebtedness at the time of the survey, but rather the average amount of such credit employed during the year.

of the 96 tenants who furnished such information employed such credit, averaging $99; all but 2 of the croppers reported the use of store credit, averaging $100. In all cases, except for 2 of the owners, time prices higher than cash prices were charged.

TABLE 11.—*Summary sheet for short-time credit*

Tenure	Credit from bank					Credit from store		
	Total operators	No short-time credit	Bank credit	Average amount of bank credit used [1]	Average rate of interest for bank credit	Operators using store credit	Average amount of credit at store [1]	Number paying time prices
	Number	*Number*	*Number*	*Dollars*	*Per cent*	*Number*	*Dollars*	*Number*
Owners	146	16	18	598	7.6	130	125	128
Tenants [2]	96	0	2	65	7.0	96	99	96
Croppers	14	2	0	0	0	12	100	12
All operators	[3] 256	[3] 18	20	545	7.5	238	113	236

[1] This is averaged by the number who used credit.
[2] Two tenants admitted that their credit was gone.
[3] Information not available for all owners and tenants.

PROGRESS IN ACCUMULATION

In other studies similar to this, involving a larger number of operators, it has been found that progress in tenure and in accumulation of wealth are closely associated. This was found to be apparently true wtih the farmers in the present survey. In a general way, the relation between tenure status and wealth status is shown by Table 12.

The average net wealth of the 112 tenants interviewed was $815.44 for each operator. Of the aggregate net wealth of these tenants only $1,000 was gratuitously received, that is, wealth received from inheritance, gift, or marriage, and this $1,000 was received by one tenant.

TABLE 12.—*Average present net worth of 261 operators and its sources by tenure classes for colored farmers included in survey, Southampton County, Va.*

Tenure classes	Operators	Average net worth per operator	Average amount of wealth accumulated from earnings	Wealth received from increases in valuation of land		Wealth received through inheritance, gift, or marriage	
				Operators receiving	Average amount [1]	Operators receiving	Average amount [1]
	Number			*Number*		*Number*	
All tenants	112	$815.44	$806.51			1	$8.93
All owners	149	8,420.23	5,412.63	146	$2,869.65	14	137.95
All operators	261	5,156.87	3,436.06	146	1,638.23	15	82.58

[1] All operators.

The average wealth of the owners interviewed was $8,420.23, of which 1.6 per cent was wealth received gratuitously. Of 149 farm owners, 14 had received wealth through inheritance, gift, or marriage, averaging about $1,469 per person receiving wealth from these sources, or about $138 for each owner operator.

Increase in land valuation was a very important source of wealth for owner operators. Of the 149 owners, 146 reported net increase in the valuation of land which they owned or had owned. These net increases averaged $2,870 per man receiving wealth from this source, representing 34 per cent of the average net worth of all owners.

It is interesting to compare the influence of net increase in land value with a similar figure obtained for five other local surveys among farmers, most of whom were whites, in Kentucky, Tennessee, and Texas. Of the total net worth of the owners interviewed in these five surveys, 48.2 per cent was from net increases in land values.

It is not surprising that net increases in the valuation of farm property amounted to so much of the total wealth of owners, for the average value of farm real estate in the county, as shown by the census, increased from $7.07 per acre in 1900 to $54.80 per acre in 1920, or a gross increase of 675 per cent in the two decades.

It should be borne in mind that the statistics on land valuation were estimates, and in reality represented only "book" values, which probably have considerably decreased because of general agricultural depression since the time the survey was made.

RATES OF ACCUMULATION

Some of the farmers have taken a longer time than others to achieve their present net worth. It is of interest to determine at what annual rate these negro farmers have been able to accumulate wealth, leaving out of account that acquired directly through increases in land values or inheritance, gift, or marriage. (Table 13.)

Merely excluding the amount of increase in wealth due to change in land valuation or received gratuitously does not leave a figure which measures accurately the progress that is to be expected of the same class of farmers not enjoying these special advantages, for the receipt of wealth gratuitously increases the earning power of the farmer and may alter to that extent his ability to accumulate.

TABLE 13.—*Two hundred sixty-one colored farm operators classified by tenure and by average amount accumulated annually from earnings, Southampton County, Va.* [1]

Range of annual earnings	Tenants			Owners			All operators		
	Total in group	Percentage of total	Percentage of total accumulations	Total in group	Percentage of total	Percentage of total accumulations	Total in group	Percentage of total	Percentage of total accumulations
	Number	*Per cent*	*Per cent*	*Number*	*Per cent*	*Per cent*	*Number*	*Per cent*	*Per cent*
Less than $50	69	61.6	35.1	22	14.8	2.8	91	34.9	6.1
$50 to $99	28	25.0	35.4	30	20.1	7.5	58	22.2	10.3
$100 to $149	11	9.8	20.0	27	18.1	11.3	38	14.6	12.1
$150 to $199	3	2.7	7.9	20	13.4	8.6	23	8.8	8.5
Less than $200	111	99.1	98.4	99	66.4	30.2	210	80.5	37.0
$200 to $399	1	.9	1.6	29	19.5	20.8	30	11.5	18.9
$400 to $599				11	7.4	17.4	11	4.2	15.7
$600 to $799				4	2.7	9.2	4	1.5	8.2
$800 to $999				2	1.3	6.2	2	.8	5.6
$1,000 or more				4	2.7	16.2	4	1.5	14.6
Total	112	100.0	100.0	149	100.0	100.0	261	100.0	100.0
Total earnings			$90,329			$806,483			$896,812

[1] Since the total period of accumulation varied for different individuals, the average annual accumulation of each farmer was modified by the average index numbers of wholesale prices of all commodities for the period of accumulation. The index numbers employed were those published by the United States Department of Labor.

Of the tenants, 61.6 per cent had accumulated less than $50 per year on the average since they began their earning life. The total earnings of this group, who constituted approximately one-fourth of all the men interviewed, was only 3.5 per cent of the total wealth accumulated from earnings by all of the men interviewed. In short, 26 per cent of all of the accumulators had saved only 3.5 per cent of all the earned and saved wealth. The average age of this group of men was 43.4, as compared with the average of 46.8 for all men interviewed.

Contrasted with this extreme of the poorer earners is that of the few better accumulators of wealth. There were 4 men out of the 261 who had been able to save from their earnings $1,000 or more for each year since their earning life began. These 4 men constituted only 1.5 per cent of all operators, yet they had accumulated 14.6 per cent of all the wealth saved by all men interviewed.

The great difference between the ability of the tenant class and that of the owner class to accumulate wealth may be shown by comparing the proportion of all tenants who have been able to accumulate $200 or more with that of all owners who have done the same. It should be recalled that the accumulation does not include wealth acquired directly through increase of land value. Only 0.9 per cent of all tenants had accumulated $200 or more per year, whereas 33.6 per cent of all owners had accomplished this. The great difference is partly due to differences in men; that is, generally speaking, a larger proportion of the tenant group consists of persons who were either of inferior economic ability or of inferior personal advantages, such as education. The difference, however, also reflects the advantages in earnings and in accumulation due to larger wealth received gratuitously.

Of the total wealth accumulated from earnings by both tenants and owners, 37 per cent was saved by men who had accumulated $200 or less per year. This group constituted 80.5 per cent of all the operators interviewed. Hence, they saved roughly only one-half of their proportional amount. The average age of this group of men was 46.4 as compared with the above age given for all operators interviewed. Of the total group of men who had accumulated $200 or more per year 1 was a tenant and 50 were owners. This group constituted 19.5 per cent of all farmers interviewed and had accumulated from their earnings 63 per cent of the total wealth accumulated by all men interviewed or more than three times their proportional share. The average age of this group was 48.4 years, somewhat above that of the less than $200 group.

This method of contrasting earning power underestimates the real earning power of the better accumulators, because part of their real earning power comes from investment ability, but even allowing for this, the great variation in accumulative ability of different men is noticeable. The importance of the recognition of this fact in any policy of economic betterment is self-evident. The problem of improving the economic and social life of the lower extreme is a very different problem from that of improving the economic status of the higher extreme.

CLASSIFICATION OF ACCUMULATORS OF WEALTH

To ascertain a few facts associated with men of small or large accumulative ability, both tenure classes were put into three groups of accumulators: "Best accumulators," "medium accumulators," and "poorest accumulators." This grouping was made in a way that would partially eliminate the influence of changes in price levels during which men of different ages had been saving; and in a way to eliminate in part the influence that stage of earning life had on saving ability.[7] This classification is based on average annual accumulation of wealth after deducting net increases in land values and wealth received from inheritance, gift, and marriage.

TABLE 14.—*Average present net worth and its sources for 261 tenants and owners, classified by success in accumulation*

Class of accumulators	Operators	Present net worth of operators	Wealth received gratuitously	Wealth received from net increases in farm real estate	Net accumulation from all other sources [1]
Tenant class:	*Number*				
Poorest	37	$333	----------	----------	$333
Medium	37	688	----------	----------	688
Best	38	1,409	[2] $26	----------	1,383
Owner class:					
Poorest	49	2,767	295	$937	1,535
Medium	50	4,834	55	1,288	3,491
Best	50	17,546	67	6,345	11,134

[1] Not including wealth received gratuitously or through increase in valuation of farm real estate.
[2] Averaged by all in class; only one received wealth thus.

The results of this classification of farm operators into accumulator classes are shown by Table 14. The total wealth accumulated from earnings by tenants averaged $333 for poorest accumulators, $688 for medium accumulators, and $1,383 for best accumulators. The corresponding figures for owner operators are respectively $1,535, $3,491 and $11,134 for the poorest, medium, and best classes.

The differences in net worth of these six groups cover a wider range than do the figures on earnings; the net worth of the poorest tenant accumulators averaged $333, whereas that of the best owner accumulators averaged $17,546. Although the owners received practically all of the wealth inherited or coming from marriage or gift, there is no relation between the amount thus received and the classes of accumulators among the owners; the best owner accumulators received an average of $67 from these sources, whereas the poorest received an average of $295. On the other hand, as would be expected, there is a close relation between wealth received from net increases in land value and the total net worth of the different classes. The poorest owner accumulators received an average of $937 from

[7] Operators were classified into three age groups: Those below 30 years of age, those from 30 to 49, inclusive, and those 50 or more. This grouping probably served to eliminate some of the influence that period of earning life has on accumulative ability. Within these age groups operators were divided into three numerically equal groups of best, medium, and poorest accumulators, these classes being determined on the basis of average annual accumulation of wealth divided by the average purchasing power of a dollar during the individual's earning life. The best groups, the medium groups, and the poorest groups were then thrown together regardless of age grouping. The tenants and owners were kept separate throughout the classification.

net increases in the value of farm real estate whereas the best owner accumulators received from this source an average of $6,345 or nearly seven times that of the former group. Increase in the valuation of land was not included in the figures on wealth accumulated but it was evidently directly or indirectly connected with the process of accumulation.

RELATION OF RATE OF ACCUMULATION TO VARIOUS CONDITIONS

ACCUMULATION OF WEALTH IN RELATION TO VALUE AND SIZE OF FARM

That there is a close relation between operators of small accumulative ability and those having farms of small value is evident from a glance at Table 15. The poorest class of tenant accumulators operated farms worth on the average $1,151, those of the medium class, $1,515, and those of the best class, $2,305. The poorest class of owner accumulators operated farms averaging $2,713, medium accumulators, $4,407, and best accumulators, $12,532.

There was much less difference in the average crop acreage of the different classes of tenant accumulators than between the valuations of farms of these classes. The poorest tenant accumulators had an average of 28.6 acres in crops, whereas the best had an average of 36.6 acres. The difference, however, between the value of equipment on these farms was fully as great as the difference in value of the farms themselves, the poorest accumulators having on an average $293 worth of equipment as compared with $605 worth for best tenant accumulators. The difference in number of work stock between these classes was not nearly so large as the difference in equipment value. Although the quality of work stock may vary between the poorest and best accumulators, it is doubtful if this accounts for all the difference in value of equipment as between the classes. It is probable that the poorest tenants are rather poorly equipped with farming implements and machinery as compared with the best accumulator classes.

TABLE 15.—*Average relation between different classes of accumulators of wealth and various items indicating size of farm business for 261 operators*

Class of accumulators	Operators	Value		Acreage in crops	Work stock per operator
		Land and buildings	Equipment		
Tenant class:	*Number*			*Acres*	*Number*
Poorest	37	$1,151	$293	28.6	1.4
Medium	37	1,515	383	35.2	1.5
Best	38	2,305	605	36.6	2.0
Owner class:					
Poorest	49	2,713	457	28.1	2.1
Medium	50	4,407	613	42.9	2.5
Best	50	12,532	1,912	74.1	4.3

When the various grades of accumulators among owner operators are compared in a similar way, it is found that there are as great relative differences in valuation of equipment as in the case of the various classes of tenants. Likewise, medium accumulators operated about 53 per cent more acres in crops than the poorest class, and the best class operated 164 per cent more than the poorest class.

The poorest class of owners had one head of work stock for each 13.4 acres in crops; the best accumulators had one head for each 17.2 acres. This suggests the probability that there was a more efficient use of work stock on the farms of the best accumulators than there was on the farms of the poorest. The poorest tenant accumulators had on an average only $10 worth of equipment value for each crop acre; the best class of tenants, approximately $17. The corresponding classes and figures for owners were respectively $16 and $26 per crop acre. It is fairly evident, therefore, that there was a close relation between low equipment value per acre of crop land and low ability in accumulation of wealth.

It is possible to overemphasize the value of better equipment as a means of improving the economic status of poor accumulators. Nevertheless these data seem to indicate that low equipment value is one of the difficulties standing in the way of greater accumulation of wealth by the poorer classes. On the one hand, it may be regarded as one of the disabilities due to failure to accumulate; on the other hand, the lack of equipment probably tends to limit income and therefore the power to accumulate.

RELATION OF TENURE AND SUCCESS IN ACCUMULATION TO EDUCATION OF OPERATORS AND THEIR CHILDREN

The money value of an education has been often erroneously measured by comparing the incomes of people of different school attainments. The error in this method is found in the assumption that education is the cause of all of the difference in income received by the various groups. In Table 16 data are presented on the education of the various classes of accumulators in this survey.

TABLE 16.—*Education of specified classes of 261 colored farmers accumulating wealth in Southampton County, Va., and of their children*

Class of accumulators	Average grade attained by operator	Children not above school age	Average grade attained by children above school age	Average age of children	
				Grades I to IV	Grades V to VIII
Tenant class:	*Grades*	*Number*	*Grades*	*Years*	*Years*
Poorest	4.1	116	5.1	11.2	16.7
Medium	4.6	114	5.3	10.7	16.1
Best	4.8	95	6.1	10.6	17.1
Owner class:					
Poorest	4.1	100	5.3	12.0	17.2
Medium	4.3	139	5.3	11.6	16.4
Best	5.2	143	6.0	7.8	15.8

Some relationship is indicated between the education of the operator and his success in accumulation. For each class of tenure the best accumulators had attained a somewhat higher average degree of advancement in school than the medium accumulators, and the latter in turn had attained a somewhat higher average degree of advancement than the group of poorest accumulators.

The average grade attained in school by the children of these negro farmers was somewhat higher for the best group of accumulators in each class of tenure than for the groups of medium and poorest accumulators. Of course, this might be attributed to the higher average age of the children of the latter group.

Indications that the children of the best owner accumulators enjoyed superior school advantages, however, are found in the considerably lower average ages of their children in the first to fourth grades, inclusive, and in the fifth to eighth grades. The data for tenant accumulators are less conclusive. For the first to fourth grades the average age of children of best accumulators is lowest, but this is not the case for children in the fifth to eighth grades.

Among the families interviewed there were no children of school age who were beyond the eighth grade. Of the total number of children of school age (Table 17), 707 in all, 403 were reported as being in the first four grades, and 304 in the fifth to eighth grades inclusive. The average age of tenant children in the first four grades was 10.9 years as compared with 10.4 for the average age of children of owners. Pupils in the fifth to eighth grades, inclusive, were 16.6 years of age in the case of children of tenants, and 16.3 years in the case of children of owners. Thus it will be seen that the children of tenants were slightly retarded in average grade attained by a given age as compared with children of owners, but that the difference was very slight.

TABLE 17.—*Average age of pupils in two groups of grades, classified by tenure of father*

Tenure class of father	Pupils in Grades I to IV, inclusive		Pupils in Grades V to VIII, inclusive [1]	
	Total	Average age	Total	Average age
	Number	*Years*	*Number*	*Years*
Tenants	200	10.9	125	16.6
Owners	203	10.4	179	16.3
All operators	403	10.7	304	16.5

[1] No children were reported to be above Grade VIII.

STANDARDS OF LIVING OF FARM FAMILIES

For both tenants and owners the average value of family living obtained from the farm was higher for the best class of accumulators than for the medium class, and likewise, higher for the medium class than for the poorest class. (Table 18.) This is not conclusive evidence that obtaining a large amount of family living from the farm will result in every farmer thereby having greater accumulations of wealth, but the presumption that this is favorable to accumulation seems to be warranted for two reasons: (1) A great deal of the food and fuel consumed may represent products otherwise wasted, and (2) much of it may represent spare-time labor which would otherwise be idle. Good managers usually develop these seemingly unimportant sources of income.

It is interesting that the average amounts in the value of groceries purchased for the several classes vary much less than do the average values of all family living obtained from the farm. All classes of accumulators except the best owners spent between $73 and $91 per year on the average for groceries; the best accumulators among owners spent an average of $130, an amount considerably above that of the other classes. Other surveys similar to this have shown that

the poorest accumulators buy the greatest amount of groceries, but the data here presented do not show this. In short, the larger average amount of family living obtained from the farms by the higher classes of accumulators reflects a higher standard of living rather than a reduction in food purchased.

TABLE 18.—*Family living expenses of different classes of accumulators*

Class of accumulators	Operators	Average persons in family	Family living expenses					
			Amount bought	Amount furnished by farm	Total	Selected items		
						Value of food products raised on farm [1]	Groceries purchased	Tobacco and other personal expenses
Tenant class:	*Number*	*Number*						
Poorest	37	6.7	$188	$217	$405	$107.0	$82	$8.30
Medium	37	6.7	200	241	441	122.4	88	9.57
Best	38	6.4	223	296	519	156.4	80	6.79
Owner class:								
Poorest	49	5.4	197	272	469	132.0	73	5.86
Medium	50	6.6	272	324	596	161.0	91	7.16
Best	50	6.9	522	452	974	262.0	130	9.10

[1] Meats, poultry, dairy, and garden products.

If the total amount of family living cost be taken as an index of standard of living, the greatest difference in standards will be found between the poorest tenant class and the best owner class of accumulators, the latter having a family living cost 2.4 times as much as the former.

Food raised on the farm probably influences the standard of living more than the same value of purchased family living supplies. In the first place, it is usually somewhat undervalued by the farmer; and in the second place, it is, as a rule, of better quality than the same kinds of foods purchased. Of the total difference in family living cost between the best and poorest classes of tenants 69 per cent is accounted for by the difference in amounts received from the farm. On the other hand, of the total difference in family living cost between the best and poorest owner classes only 36 per cent is accounted for by the difference in the amounts received from the farm. In short, the amount received from the farm is a more important factor in the higher standards of the best tenants than in the case of the best owners.

DISTRIBUTION OF EXPENDITURES FOR FAMILY LIVING

During the calendar year 1921 the average expenditure for living by tenants on the farms studied was $455, as compared with $681 for owners. (Table 19.)

Including the value of living furnished by the farm, tenants spent for all items of family living approximately $70 for each member of the family, while owners spent approximately $108 for each member of the family. As previously stated, the portion of family living produced on the farm probably raises the standard of living more per dollar of value than does the portion of family living purchased. The value of food obtained from the farm was two-thirds as much for each person in tenant families as for each person in the families of owners.

TABLE 19.—*Average cost of all family living and of selected classes of items for 1921*

Tenure class	Furnished by farm	Purchased	Total per family	Selected items				
				Food products raised on farm [1]	Groceries purchased	Clothing purchased	Gifts to church and charity	Spent for tobacco and other personal expenses
Tenants	$251	$204	$455	$129	$83	$75	$8.65	$8.21
Owners	350	331	681	185	98	87	19.22	7.38
All operators	307	277	584	161	92	81	14.66	7.72

[1] Meat, garden, poultry, and dairy products raised on farm.

Tenant families purchased an average of $83 worth of food during the year. This was only 64 per cent as much as the food raised and consumed on the farm. The families of owners purchased an average of $98 worth of food during the year, which was 53 per cent as much as the amount of food raised and consumed on their farms.

Tenants gave to church and charity on an average $8.65, whereas owners gave slightly more than twice this amount. On the other hand, tenants spent more for tobacco and other personal expenses than did owners.

SIZE OF FAMILY AND OF HOUSE

A common form of disability in negro life is poor housing. Conditions in the section for which this study was made are probably much better in regard to housing than are conditions in certain other parts of the South where negro population predominates. Among the operators interviewed, tenant houses averaged 4.3 rooms as compared with 5.2 rooms for houses of owners. (Table 20.) The size of tenant families was, on an average, 6.6 persons, as compared with 6.3 persons for the owners. Thus there were 1.5 persons for each room among tenants and 1.2 persons for each room among owner families.

These facts do not suggest serious overcrowding in the sense in which this term is applied to city conditions. The principal defect is found in the condition of the houses and in their environment. The comparative condition of the houses for the two tenure classes is indicated best by the figures on average value of farm houses, which were $391 for tenants and $1,147 for owners. Thus it will be seen that there is a marked difference between tenant houses and owner houses—a much greater difference than data on the average number of rooms would indicate.

TABLE 20.—*Average value and size of dwellings, and size of family, by tenure class*

Tenure class	Average persons in family	Average persons per room	Average value of dwelling	Average number of rooms in dwelling	Reported condition of house		
					Good	Medium	Poor
	Number	*Number*		*Number*	*Number*	*Number*	*Number*
Tenants	6.6	1.5	$391	4.3	47	58	6
Owners	6.3	1.2	1,147	5.2	98	47	0
All operators	6.4	1.3	820	4.9	145	105	6

These values, even for owners, may seem unusually low as compared with those in other sections of the country; but it should be borne in mind that much of the lumber from which they are built is sawed locally. Furthermore, figures given by the farmers unquestionably undervalue their houses so far as reproduction costs are concerned. Reports on the condition of the houses are of a very general nature and must be considered thus in order to be seen in their true light. Fifty-eight of the 111 tenants reporting on the condition of their houses stated them to be in moderately good condition; six reported poor condition; and 47 said their houses were in good repair. Contrasted with this are the reports of 145 owners, of whom 98 said their houses were in good condition; 47 in medium condition; and none in poor condition.

USE OF AUTOMOBILE, TELEPHONE, AND MAIL DELIVERY

In many sections of the country the automobile, the telephone and the rural free delivery have done much to improve domestic, community, and social life of farmers. Of the farmers included in this survey, only 10.7 per cent of the tenants and 26.2 per cent of the owners reported automobiles. None of the tenant families and only nine of all the owners, or 3.4 per cent of all farmers interviewed, had telephones. Even the town of Adams Grove was, at the time of this survey (1921), without telephone service. All families reporting on the question of mail had rural free delivery.

PERIODICAL READING MATERIAL IN HOMES

The proportions of tenants and owners who received regularly daily or weekly papers, magazines, and agricultural journals are shown in Table 21. Subscribing to daily papers is far less prevalent in this section than in others where similar surveys have been made among white farmers. Only 3 out of the 112 tenants and 25 out of the 149 owners took daily newspapers. The service of daily mail delivery to these farmers would lead one to expect a higher percentage receiving daily papers.

TABLE 21.—*Number and percentage of families taking various classes of newspapers and magazines*

Tenure class	Operators reporting	Percentage of families subscribing to—				
		Daily papers	Weekly papers	Magazines	Agricultural journals	No periodical literature
	Number	*Per cent*	*Per cent*	*Per cent*	*Per cent*	*Per cent*
Tenants	112	2.7	13.4	1.8	36.6	57.1
Owners	149	16.8	49.0	2.0	69.8	21.5
All operators	261	10.7	33.7	1.9	55.6	36.8

Approximately 13.4 per cent of the tenants and practically one-half of the owners took local or other weekly newspapers. Of the 112 tenants, 41 took agricultural journals, and more than two-thirds of all the owners subscribed for this type of periodical. Considering the fact that there is probably some overlapping between the figures

for agricultural journals and those for weekly papers, this is a good showing for colored farmers, and the proportion in this survey was considerably larger than the proportion of farmers taking this type of paper among whites as ascertained from similar surveys in other Southern States.

EXTENT OF MIGRATION AND DEGREE OF STABILITY OF OCCUPANCY

All of the 146 owners for whom data were available and all but 1 of the tenants at some time during their experience as farm operators had moved from one farm to another. (Table 22.) The owners, with an average age of 50.6 years, had made such changes an average of 3.7 times; with the tenants, whose average age was 42 years, the average number of changes was 4. The average period between changes for owners was 6.9 years, and for tenants, 4.4 years. The average period of occupancy for owners was less than half as long as the average period owner farmers in the United States as a whole reported in 1920 that they had occupied their farms. On the other hand, the tenants studied in Southampton County reported a somewhat longer period of occupancy than was reported in 1920, for tenants in the United States as a whole. It should be noted, however, that in the latter case the period of occupancy had not yet expired. For the most part, these movements were within the same community. Of the owners 60.3 per cent and of the tenants 72.3 per cent, had never changed their trading center. Thus, tenant migrations were merely local in a larger proportion of cases than for owners.

TABLE 22.—*Migration of farmers*

Tenure	Owners	Tenants	Tenure	Owners	Tenants
	Number	*Number*		*Number*	*Number*
All operators	[1] 146	112	Number who had not changed trading center, school, or church	88	81
Number who changed farms	146	111			
Percentage who changed farms	100	99.1			
Average number of changes	3.7	4.0	Percentage who had not changed trading center, school, or church	60.3	72.3
Average years between changes	6.9	4.4			
Average present age of operator, years	50.6	42			

[1] Detailed information not available for total number of owners.

The degree of stability as measured by the average length of the period between changes from farm to farm is shown in Table 23. Six of the owners had an average period of occupancy less than 2 years, between a fifth and a sixth had remained on the same farm less than 4 years, about two-fifths had remained an average of less than 6 years, but more than a fifth averaged from 6 to 7 years between changes of farms. Eighty-two per cent of the tenants had remained on the various farms occupied from 1 to 5 years, nearly two-fifths of the total for less than 4 years; but about one-sixth held continuous occupancy between 6 and 7 years.

TABLE 23.—*Owners and tenants classified by average number of years on various farms occupied*

Average years between changes of farms	Owners	Tenants	Average years between changes of farms	Owners	Tenants
	Number	*Number*		*Number*	*Number*
0–1	6	9	14–15	4	
2–3	21	33	16–17	1	
4–5	32	49	18–19	1	
6–7	33	18	20–21	1	
8–9	26	2	22 and over	1	
10–11	12				
12–13	8			[1] 146	[1] 111

[1] Information not available for total number of owners and tenants.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In Southampton County, Va., negro farmers have tended gradually to increase in relative number as compared with white farmers. Negro farmers have made encouraging progress in climbing to independent farm ownership, but the great increase in the price of farm real estate which occurred in the decade 1910 to 1920 tended to check this progress.

Since the Civil War notable progress has been made in the accumulation of wealth. The low price of land in the early post-bellum days favored the attainment of land ownership. The rapid increase in the value of timber products afforded many of these farmers a means of employing their labor profitably in disposing of the timber on their land and facilitated clearing for crops. The rapid development of the market for peanuts and the improvement in the price of cotton following the early nineties, and intensified by the World War, have also been favorable conditions. The net worth of the majority of the owner farmers has also been largely developed by the rapid increase in the price of land.

The progress achieved has been accomplished in spite of a none too favorable credit system. The majority of the farmers had not made use of the facilities of the farm-loan system, largely because they were not aware of its advantages and of the proper methods of procedure in obtaining loans. As in other parts of the South, there has been an undue reliance on store credit as a means of supplying short-time credit needs.

Progress in accumulation is closely related to reliance on the farm as a source of food supplies. Although the best accumulators made the largest use of home-grown foods, this reliance did not greatly reduce the dependence on store purchases, but rather tended to amplify the standard of living.

Superior education apparently had not been an outstanding reason for superiority in accumulation, although the best accumulators had attained a slightly higher grade in school than those who were less successful in accumulation.

The more successful were apparently giving their children somewhat greater educational advantages than were enjoyed by the children of the less successful. With the exception of a few of the

wealthiest farmers the children of all the farmers were limited to the educational facilities provided in the public-school system of the county, and superior advantages consisted in attaining a higher average grade in the public schools or in attaining a higher grade at a relatively earlier age.

Inheritance and other adventitious methods of wealth acquisition had exercised but small influence on the process of accumulation, and the results of this study emphasize conclusions indicated in other similar studies made by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics that the human factor is more influential than external circumstances in accounting for progress in accumulation. This is particularly true in the instances of unusual success. In every community certain individuals, operating in the same environment as their neighbors, succeed in thrusting themselves far in advance of the general progress in wealth accumulation achieved by their associates.

Even within the limitations of the economic resources of these negro families there is room for much progress in the qualitative improvement of the standard of living, and particularly in the enrichment of the intellectual life, which in these days of inexpensive publications is less limited by inadequate economic resources than by undeveloped or underdeveloped taste. A few families had achieved a comparatively high standard of living judged from this point of view.

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